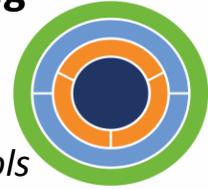




Vision for School Improvement: Applying the *Framework for Great Schools*



Step 1: As a community, develop a shared understanding of the *Framework for Great Schools*

ACTIVITY: LOOKING AT CURRENT PRACTICE TOWARD A SHARED UNDERSTANDING (60 MINUTES)

OVERVIEW

As schools engage in the three-step process outlined in [A Vision for School Improvement: Applying the Framework for Great Schools](#), teams will begin by developing a shared understanding of the *Framework* as a community. Through a series of sequenced reflection questions, this activity guides schools through the process of developing a strong understanding of the elements of the *Framework for Great Schools* and identifying connections among the elements and their school community. This activity can be done in small or large groups and teams across the school community.

OBJECTIVE

Through reflection and discussion, participants will develop a shared understanding of the elements of the *Framework for Great Schools*, identify connections to current practice in the school community, and develop next steps for furthering school improvement efforts.

MATERIALS

- [Step 1 Guiding Questions](#) (attached)
- [Graphic organizer](#) (attached)
- Chart paper

CONNECTED ACTIVITIES

While this activity can be conducted on its own, its content also connects with the following activities available on the [Vision for School Improvement](#) website:

- Exploring the *Framework for Great Schools*
- Exploring a Vision for School Improvement: Applying the *Framework for Great Schools*
- Exploring the Research Behind the *Framework for Great Schools*

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What do the elements of the *Framework for Great Schools* look like in our school?
- What current strengths can we build upon connected to the *Framework for Great Schools*?

FACILITATION NOTES

1. Introduction and framing (3 minutes).

- Welcome participants and review the objective and guiding questions of the activity.
- Explain that participants will work toward a shared understanding of the *Framework* by:

- Discussing guiding questions related to the *Framework for Great Schools*
- Considering the elements of the *Framework for Great Schools*, the interplay among them, and their connections to my current practice

2. Part A: Exploring the guiding questions for the elements (30 minutes).

- Ask participants to independently read part A of the [Guiding Questions for Schools](#) to support discussion among school teams. Explain that the tool is aimed to help facilitate the conversation of each element of the *Framework for Great Schools* and how they might come alive in the school community. For each element, participants will answer the following questions on their [graphic organizer](#) in groups: *Note: Consider asking participants to conduct this section in small groups, jigsawing their findings by sharing out as a whole group after part A. Each group may explore 1-3 elements, using one graphic organizer per element.*
 - *What does this element look like in your school? How have you talked about this element in your school community in the past? What is your shared understanding of what good looks like?*
 - *What would this element look like if it were aligned to your overall school priorities?*
 - *How does this element apply to students with disabilities, English language learners, or students that are struggling?*
 - *Think of a time when you have seen this element well supported and aligned to a school's priority work. What was the approach?*
- After participants have finished reading and responding to the questions, invite participants to share out and chart responses.

3. Part B: Exploring the interplay among the elements in the *Framework* (20 minutes).

- Ask participants to independently read part B of the [Guiding Questions for Schools](#) and consider the following questions on their graphic organizer:
 - *What are examples of work in your school that address multiple elements or connect across elements?*
 - *Consider the elements that are current areas of strength in your school. How might you leverage these to support other elements?*
 - *What are examples of work in your school that target a single element and may benefit from making connections to other elements?*
 - *Why are the six elements of the *Framework* depicted in concentric circles, rather than in a list? How does this depiction embody the research findings?*
- Ask participants to discuss in small groups and then as a whole group, charting responses.

4. Part C: Identifying implications of the *Framework for Great Schools* moving forward (5 minutes).

- Ask participants to discuss the best way to share the information gathered from their team with the larger school community (e.g., if this activity is done with grade or department team, the discussion might touch on how to share the collected data and continue the discussion with the leadership team).

5. Identifying next steps and available resources (2 minutes).

- Ask participants to identify and share one next step they will take collectively and individually to support this work in their school (in pairs, or in the whole group).
- Remind participants of the supporting resources and activities available on the [Vision for School Improvement](#) website:
 - Research brief on the research behind the *Framework for Great Schools*
 - Case studies and snapshots of current practice in NYC schools
 - Exploring the *Framework for Great Schools*
 - Exploring a Vision for School Improvement: Applying the *Framework for Great Schools*



Guiding Questions for Schools

A reflection tool to support discussion among school teams (step 1)



As schools develop a shared understanding of the *Framework for Great Schools* (the first step in [A Vision for School Improvement: Applying the Framework for Great Schools](#)), these guiding questions can be used as a tool to support reflection and discussion among school teams.

Step 1: As a community, develop a shared understanding of the *Framework for Great Schools*

In small and whole group conversations, develop a common understanding of how each of the Framework's six elements and the overall *Framework* support student learning.

Part A: To explore each element, you might discuss:

- What does this element look like in your school? How have you talked about this element in your school community in the past? What is your shared understanding of what good looks like?
- What would this element look like if it were aligned to your overall school priorities?
- How does this element apply to students with disabilities, English language learners, or students that are struggling?
- Think of a time when you have seen this element well supported and aligned to a school's priority work. What was the approach?

Part B: To explore the Interplay among the Elements in the Framework, you might discuss:

- What are examples of work in your school that address multiple elements or connect across elements?
- Consider the elements that are current areas of strength in your school. How might you leverage these to support other elements?
- What are examples of work in your school that target a single element and may benefit from making connections to other elements?
- Why are the six elements of the *Framework* depicted in concentric circles, rather than in a list? How does this depiction embody the [research findings](#)?



Graphic Organizer

Part A: Exploring the guiding questions for the elements

	<p><i>(circle one)</i></p> <p>Effective School Leadership Strong Family-Community Supportive Environment</p> <p>Ties</p> <p>Rigorous Instruction Collaborative Teachers Trust</p>		
	My ideas:	Shared ideas:	
<p>1</p> <p><i>What does this element look like in your school? How have you talked about this element in your school community in the past? What is your shared understanding of what good looks like?</i></p>			
<p>2</p> <p><i>What would this element look like if it were aligned to your overall school priorities?</i></p>			
<p>3</p> <p><i>How does this element apply to students with disabilities, English language learners, or students that are struggling?</i></p>			
<p>4</p> <p><i>Think of a time when you have seen this element well supported and aligned to a school's priority work. What was the approach?</i></p>			

Graphic Organizer

Part B: Exploring the interplay among the elements in the *Framework*

What are examples of work in your school that address multiple elements or connect across elements?

Consider the elements that are current areas of strength in your school. How might you leverage these to support other elements?

What are examples of work in your school that target a single element and may benefit from making connections to other elements?

Why are the six elements of the *Framework* depicted in concentric circles, rather than in a list? How does this depiction embody the [research findings](#)?